

RICAT Minutes
Moved from ORS (due to ice on sidewalks in Providence)
To TechACCESS
110 Jefferson Boulevard ~ Warwick, RI

February 24, 2005

- Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Chair Waller at 2:40 p.m.
- Members present: Jill Waller, Jeanne Panarace, Margaret Hoye, Harry Dunbar, Ron Racine, Emily Lennon, and Kerri Cicione
- ATAP Partners: Beverly Johnson, Anne Mulready, Lis Hubbard, Erica Deis, Lezlee Shaffer, Lisa Labitt, Judy Carlson
- ATAP Project Director: Regina Connor
- Acceptance of Minutes: Emily L. made motion to accept minutes from December 9, 2004 meeting, seconded by Harry D. Motion was unanimously approved by Council members.
- Chairperson's Report: N/A
- Committee Reports:
 - Communications

Ron stated this committee hasn't met since the last RICAT meeting. However, Harry D., Ying S., and Kathy S. did a presentation at the EPOCH Assisted Living (AL) Center. Representatives from EPOCH emailed Joe Murphy that they were happy they came out and did the presentation. Ron then asked if there were any other members of RICAT who would like to sit in on presentations so they can assist in the future. Harry commented that it was fun and informative for the people attending. Regina asked how it was arranged. Ron said EPOCH contacted Ying. Judy added that they had signed up on a speakers group. Regina stated this was great PR for RICAT. Jeanne said she had spoken with Kathy and mentioned to her that prior to her retirement she had met with the person at the Health Dept. who helps license and setup training for staff at AL centers. Jeanne had asked if they would be interested in putting AT in the curriculum, and stated that might be something the communications committee could pursue. They have several trainings per year to certify a person to work at an AL center. Ron again asked that because the committee is small, to not let presentations fall on just a certain few people. Regina commented that with this type of training is held maybe 3 times a year. Ron asked Harry how many people attended their presentation. Harry responded about 7-8 consumers. Margaret asked what they spoke about. Harry responded they showed some different types of AT. Margaret told Ron she would like to volunteer to serve on this committee too. It was suggested that they put it out to the full council the next time someone wants a speaker. Judy commented this was an awesome idea, but gave a few cautionary statements as well. She stated they need to identify that this is an introductory

level training and they could suggest places to contact especially for the more costly items. Judy also stated that TechACCESS could help them put together a curriculum. Kathy and Dr. Sun have put together a kit that they take with them which includes bed risers, a hearing device, individualized pocket talker, plates with lips, silverware, phones, alerting devices, etc. Regina said this is good and will heighten peoples' awareness. Awareness is the first step, and the level of awareness is so low right now.

- Legislative

- The Committee has not met recently. Regina discussed what was happening at the Federal level. The AT Program was funded for the next fiscal year at the same level as this year, however, the down side is that the President has proposed his federal budget for FY06 and he has zeroed out the AT programs. Regina stated she feels confident funding will be put back into the budget. Next week some of the advocates on behalf of the AT programs have a meeting with some of the staffers for members on the Senate Appropriations Committee. She has been asked for personal stories about individuals using AT and the difference it has made in their lives. When Roberta was working with the legislative committee, she had collected some stories. If anyone who didn't have an opportunity to write their personal story and can now, it would be beneficial. They will also be posted on the national ATAP website. They all need to put an effort into advocating and convincing the Senate and House about the benefits of AT program. The unit within the Dept. of Education that oversaw the AT Projects never reported the progress of the national program to Congress. Emily asked Ron if the stories were ever posted on the website. He said the only one he had posted was Jill's. Harry stated he is being interviewed for the Community Counseling Center, and if any information from that could be used. Jeanne stated she received an email about the historical review of the state budget for the last 10 years, in which there was a summary of patterns of funding for people with disabilities in the Legislative Letter and asked if that was something we should subscribe to. Regina stated we have already subscribed to it and receive it in PDF format via email. Anne asked if someone does have a story to forward it to Lis. They will help them draft something short. Jill will forward hers to Lis. Emily suggested Charlie might have a copy of his too. Richard and Cathy Gaffney also did one a story, as did Myron and Marie Waldman.

- By-Laws

- Vote on revised By-Laws: Emily explained some of the changes that needed to be done in the by-laws based on the new AT act. They need to add a representative from the State Center for Independent Living, State Workforce Investment Board, RI Dept of Education, as well as one or two more council members. Jill added that in the old by-laws both the Chair and Vice Chair needed to be consumers. The proposed by-laws states only one needs to be a consumer. Jill then opened the floor for discussion. Jeanne P. asked if this was the first time the revisions were seen by the full committee. Regina responded that the By-laws Ad Hoc Committee was convened, and they met 2 or 3 times to look at the by-laws. They were then circulated to the council members 30 days prior to this meeting. Jeanne P. commented there shouldn't be acronyms in by-laws at all, and that words should be spelled out. Jeanne then questioned why so many things were eliminated under Powers and Responsibilities (Annual Review and Review of AT Training Plan), and asked if they were eliminated in the federal law. Regina

responded the federal law did not describe the duties of the advisory council. The council was first established in the by-laws. Regina continued by explaining that the expectation was that the project would exist for 10 years and then no longer exist. This would then position the council to be able to continue its work after project expired. There is no such thing as a state AT training plan, so that was taken out of the by-laws. The role of the council as it is defined by law is to work closely with the program to establish the goals of the program, to plan and implement the goals of the program, and to establish the criteria for measuring outcomes of the programs. This has been included in the proposed revisions. Jeanne stated that they need another article that covers the By-laws process. Regina responded that was in Article VIII. Jill read that article. Jeanne's copy of the By-laws was missing the last few pages. Regina stated it was an Ad Hoc By-laws committee that made the suggested revisions consistent with the new act. She also added that it could be months from now that they are going to have to be looked at again because not everything has been addressed this time around. Regina stated she feels the By-laws should be a standing committee. Emily asked Jeanne if Section II covered her concerns. Regina added that if the council finds that these by-laws are not aiding in their mission, they can be changed. Emily asked if all questions were answered regarding the revisions. Judy asked why under "Definitions" the definition of an individual with a disability. Regina responded that definition was straight out of the AT Act. Judy also questioned under "Open Meetings" why the emphasis was on architectural and environmental accessibility versus on alternate formats. Alternate formats of materials is listed under "Meeting Accessibility". Judy asked if the council has the power to appoint people temporarily to fill vacancies for members. Regina stated the council does not, and she firmly believes it should be based on votes. Jeanne asked about a quorum. Emily responded that 51% have to be consumers, and one third of the total number of members constitutes a quorum. Judy asked if they can vote by proxy. Anne responded that because the quorum is a low percentage, there is not a need. The feeling was that less people might attend if members are able to vote by proxy. Margaret H. made motion to accept revised By-laws, seconded by Harry D. Motion was unanimously approved.

- Membership/Outreach

- Vote on Chair & Vice Chair

- Emily stated there was a small group in attendance and not all people nominated were contacted as of yet. Nominees include:
 - Chair – Jeanne P., Pat F., Blair B. and Kathy S.
 - Vice – Kathy S., Ying S., Blair B., John B., Joe M., Charlie P.
 - There were no nominations from the floor.
 - They will do a vote by mail when nominees are contacted and will include a short bio for each nominee.

- Project Director's Report:

Jill brought up that they had an AFP meeting and she had a copy of the minutes. There was one RICAT member present – Bob P. Lis said that at this point, they are basically looking at doing some outreach, and they will be meeting with MATP, the Massachusetts Tech Project, about their AFP program to decide what their first steps should be. They will be having another

meeting to discuss formats and the actual project where they will create a more formal committee of consumers on March 29th at 2:00 p.m. at TechACCESS. Jill will forward minutes to RICAT members. If anyone interested in participating, they need to get in touch with Lis.

- ATAP Partners Report:

- EBEC - Lisa had forwarded a notice about a demonstration for Blind and Low Vision software that had to be rescheduled to March 22nd from 3:00 - 5:30 p.m. at EBEC. She also extended an invitation to RICAT members to all workshops. On April 2nd, the Transition Coordinators and the Dept. of Education are having a “High School to College Transition Day” at PC. She will be doing a presentation in collaboration with a person from URI. Regina added that the regional transition coordinators are working collaboratively with other agencies. Two ORS counselors are also working with them. This college transition day will be unlike college fairs where there are so many colleges/universities. This one will be particularly for students with disabilities who might have an IEP and be moving on to college. Lisa stated she is also working with some people from RITAP, RI Technical Assistance Project conducting a spring/summer leadership series where special educators and regular educators come together. The topic is the new IDEA legislation and changes that will be included in that. High school reform issues will be discussed as well as universal design and AT.
- TechACCESS - Judy stated plans are underway for the conference which will be held on November 17th. They have had their first program committee meeting. If you are interested in being on this committee, give Bev a call. Their public demonstrations on Mondays are being very well attended. Judy stated that TechAccess did have a grant with the Department of Health, however that grant will end in March, and it will not be refunded for its final 2 years. There will be a summary coming out regarding this pilot project which helped elderly people with simple devices and afterwards went back after 6 months to see how they made out. They are still looking for funding for this project. The summary will be available on their website. Jeanne P. stated she will do some research on resources. Judy added that this grant also funded Kathy S. to do her outreach programs. With regards to the AT Conference, Bev stated if members don’t feel they have the time to serve on the committee but have anything of interest for the conference, to let her know.
- OSCIL – Lezlee – Erica and Lezlee did a speaking engagement at the Feinstein Senior Center for about 15 attendees. They discussed general information about AT. They have a couple of other presentations that are being lined up at the Portsmouth and Wakefield Senior Centers. Lezlee explained about the Vibrating Smoke Detector program and how OSCIL usually goes after special grant money because each unit costs \$250. Deaf services specialist Bonnie has done a lot of outreach trying to get a handle on what the needs are out there. There is a waiting list right now. They have a retired fire marshal who does the installations. This program is not just for the deaf, but also for the hard of hearing. This device shakes the entire bed and forces the person to wake up. Lezlee also discussed the Annual OSCIL Scholarship and stated the application process is underway right now and is available on OSCIL’s website. They grant three \$1,000 scholarships where the money can be used by the individual for AT to aid in furthering their education. Person can be a high school senior or an adult returning to school. March 23rd is the deadline to submit the application. Jeanne asked if there was some reason why the AT wouldn’t be covered. Lezlee responded in case something extra like a computer adaptation that might not be covered is needed. The community living option is up and

running where they are going to nursing homes, hospitals. AT is a very important component of that transition. Lezlee finished with the Macular Degeneration Symposium stating she had flyers for this symposium coming up on May 26 at the Radisson Airport Hotel. It has a good panel of retina specialists on it.

- RI DLC: Anne M. stated that they too are funded separately, and they have been zero funded as well. RI DLC will be putting stories together too. They will be doing outreach programs to nursing homes looking at augmentative communication devices. There is concern as to whether or not the people in nursing homes are getting these devices. Anne asked that if anyone knows of an elder in a nursing home having a problem with AT, please refer them to DLC.
- Roundtable
 - Margaret H. stated that at the last State Rehabilitation Council meeting the topic of parking was brought up. They were going to write a letter to the Providence Police.
- Next Meeting Date: April 28, 2005.
- Adjournment: Motion was made by Harry D. and seconded by Emily L. that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.